concluded that his father's scientific essays were more Baconian in spirit than execution. His studies on population, hospital polity and public health, on the other hand, were highly regarded and soon became the blueprints for social reforms in Manchester.

For the reforming physicians, who brought with them, from their studies in Edinburgh and on the Continent, the latest views on medicine, duty and the dictates of religion, also emphasized their philanthropic endeavours. The sphere of duty, as Percival explained, was limitless: 'Every advance in knowledge widens its boundaries; every increase of power and wealth multiplies and diversifies the objects of it.'[72] By the end of the eighteenth century a myriad of institutions had emerged as the necessary components of the modern profession of medicine. Philanthropy was central to all of these. Private initiative motivated by charity was the social mechanism which propelled the schools, hospitals, libraries, laboratories and auxiliary health institutions in Britain. The connection between philanthropy and medicine is thus the appropriate context for a discussion of Percival's medical reforms, which constitute a particularly important part of his career.[73]

On his arrival in Manchester, Percival and a group of Edinburgh-trained physicians designed and executed a comprehensive demographic survey of their respective localities. Statistical studies such as these had played an important role in British health reform for nearly a century and, in Percival's time, bills of mortality underwrote the polemics of philanthropy. Because the prevailing populationist economic theory emphasized the correlation between population and wealth, the connection between a numerous and healthy workforce and material prosperity was a powerful incentive to charity. At the same time, the pressure of increased population, greater mobility and the expansion of the economy to industry and manufacture transformed the limited sphere of medical activities. According to Guenter Risse, this led to:

> The so-called medicalization of society [which] allowed physicians not only to reach new sectors of the bourgeoning middle class but for the first time in history to make contact with significant sectors of the populace. The range of health-related activities widened to include greater emphasis on environmental health, infant and maternal welfare, and military and naval medicine, as well as mass treatment of the population in newly erected hospitals and dispensaries. The underlying premise was that sickness could be controlled, removed, and perhaps even prevented by conscious and deliberate application of enlightened views about health and disease.[74]

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Projects such as Percival's were attractive to aspiring physicians who wished to establish their scientific and philanthropic credentials and to enhance their local stature through membership in a larger national and international scientific community. Young physicians were encouraged in their statistical studies by the London Royal Society under the presidency of Sir John Pringle (from 1772 to 1778).[75]

In 1773 Percival and his Manchester colleagues completed an enumeration of Manchester and Salford which he subsequently communicated to the Royal Society under the title *Proposals for Establishing More Accurate and Comprehensive Bills of Mortality in Manchester.* In his later volume of essays he explained that:

> The number of inhabitants and progress of population in the kingdom; the increase or decrease of certain diseases; the comparative healthiness of different situations, climate and seasons; and the influence of particular trades and manufactures on the duration of life, are subjects of the highest importance to the community; and equally interesting to the statesman, the philosopher and the physician.[76]

Percival argued that his bills of mortality would provide politicians with the foundation for calculating life insurance, reversionary payments, annuities for widows and old age pensions. His statistics would provide the moral philosopher data on the correlation between disease, luxury, and intemperance. Citing the low mortality figures in a rural township, he noted, for example, that '*drunkenness* is more destructive to mankind than pleurisies, fevers, or the most malignant distempers'.[77] Like other contemporary physicians, Percival also hoped to test Richard Price's theory that the national debt and irresponsible rulers had brought about a drastic decline in the nation's population.[78] Percival's own statistics demonstrated, *contra* Price, that the Lancashire industrial towns were steadily increasing in size and that industry promoted rather than decreased population. Nevertheless, he agreed with Price that these towns were the 'graves of mankind' and urged his readers to press for immediate legislative reforms to eliminate some of the worst cruelties of the factory system. He was particularly disturbed by child labour and in a report to local magistrates suggested that mill owners would increase rather than decrease their profits if they showed the same consideration for the physical welfare of the children they employed as they did for their horses and cattle.[79]

Percival made efforts to convince local authorities to refuse to

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